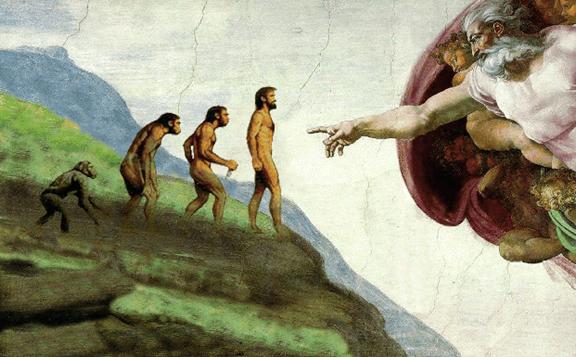
## Science and religion have a long, complicated history, and there are opposing viewpoints about whether the two are compatible. Stephen Gould referred to them as Non-Overlapping Magisteria. He believed that science explains natural phenomena and religion answers philosophical questions. According to Gould, science and religion have dissimilar criteria because they are in different domains. Others, such as Thomas Huxley, felt that “whenever science and orthodoxy have been fairly opposed, the latter has been forced to retire from the lists, bleeding and crushed if not annihilated; scotched, if not slain.” Many conflicts between religion and science are a result of the way claims are made. Religion makes claims that rely on faith without empirical evidence, while “science is the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following a systematic methodology based on evidence.” When the two collide, science has reason and evidence to back it up while religion does not.

Two current issues between science and religion are stem cell research and evolution. Stem cell research is a complex topic and the religious debate involves souls and heavenly inunctions to reproduce. The scientific community as a whole does not comment on souls, but rather the issue of suffering, which is measurable to a degree. Scientists suggest that collections of cells without central nervous systems are not sentient, nor do they suffer the way that fully developed humans do. The possible advantages of the research outweigh the chance of suffering.

Evolution is clearer. There is a large body of evidence supporting the Theory of Evolution, yet there is a recurring fight in school districts across the country about whether or not to include it in textbooks, or whether to include Creationist/Intelligent Design theories in addition to Evolution. This debate about “teaching the controversy” is a polarizing issue and has reignited discussions about whether science and religion can ever be reconciled.

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